

## Vermont Agrifuels Institute

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Switchgrass



Reed  
Canarygrass

# Vermont Agrifuels Institute

Date 27 October, 2005

Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250-3355

Mr. Secretary,

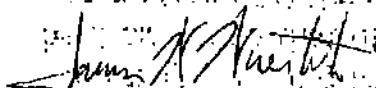
This is regarding the 2007 Farm Bill, and question 6,  
about future support for agricultural product development.

Vermont Agrifuels Institute, acting as a core technology  
group encouraging a new heating market derived from tall  
grasses, is building enthusiasm, but could use Federal help.

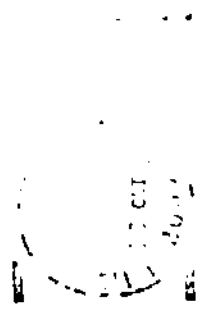
Burning certain grass pellets produces clean and abundant  
heat similar to that of wood pellets, but returns much more  
energy (over 10 times input) than other biomass fuels. Two  
acres would heat a 2000 square foot home over a northern  
US winter (5.6 tons ideally yields 100 MBTUs).

No new processes or equipment are required for pellet  
production. However, biomass stove and furnace designs  
should be improved for greater consumer convenience.  
Grass pellet commodity definitions need standardizing. Bulk  
delivery and consumer storage need further development.  
Finished pellet estimates are \$100 per ton at the farm, or  
\$175 to \$205 a ton as delivered blended commodities, bulk  
or bagged respectively, including waste management.

Unused land, with small annual attention, could supply this  
new and economical heating option for farms and homes.  
Education, coordination of resources, mutual aid, and study  
need funding, especially for technical outreach. Later, there  
would be natural support from a cooperative of producers.  
Vermont Agrifuels Institute is already involving others.

  
— James W. Wuertele, Vermont Agrifuels Institute

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